

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 IO-13
/068 W

-----201149Z 016662 /11

O P 200839Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 441
INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY
AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY
AMEMBASUY WCCA PRIORITY
NEW DELHI PRIORITY 6892
AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY
CINCPAC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 2684

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PK, PINT
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: KARACHI 1309 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY:

NOTHING APPORACHING THE OUTBREAKS IN KARACHI OCCURRED
ELSEWHERE IN PAKISTAN MARCH 19. PNA PROCESSIONS CONTINUED
AND VIOLENCE WAS REPORTED IN SEVERAL PLACES, WITH HYDER-
ABAD APPARENTLY THE WORST TROUBLE SPOT OUTSIDE
KARACHI. INFORMATION ON DEVELOPMENTS IN OUTLYING AREAS
IS BECOMING INCREASING TOUGHER TO GET DUE TO EVIDENT
GOVERNMENT PRESS CRACKDOWN. POLITICAL LEADERS CONTINUED
TO EXCHANGE STATEMENTS AND CHARGES, BUT NEITHER SIDE
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HAS MOVED FROM WHAT ARE STILL IRRECONCILABLE
POSITIONS. IT IS STILL TO EARLY TO TELL WHAT EFFECT
YESTERDAY'S BLOWUP IN KARACHI WILL HAVE ELSEWHERE.
END SUMMARY

1. NOTHING APPROACHING THE OUTBREAKS IN KARACHI (REFTEL)
OCCURRED ELSEWHERE IN PAKISTAN MARCH 19. THE PAKISTAN

NATIONAL ALLIANCE CONTINUED TO TAKE OUT PROCESSIONS IN VARIOUS PLACES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, AND THESE LED TO VIOLENCE IN HYDERABAD, LAHORE, MULTAN, LYALLPUR, AND ELSEWHERE. HYDERABAD APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THE COUNTRY'S PRINCIPAL TROUBLE SPOT OUTSIDE KARACHI. THE PRESS REPORTS THAT SEVERAL PEOPLE WERE KILLED THERE IN POLICE FIRINGS FOLLOWING EFFORTS BY THE PNA TO MOUNT PROCESSIONS FROM TEN DIFFERENT PLACES. A COMPLETE HARTAL REPORTEDLY FOLLOWED. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, ANOTHER PERSON WAS KILLED WHEN A PPP WORKER FIRED AT A CROWD OF DEMONSTRATORS. NO POLICE FIRINGS WERE REPORTED IN THE PUNJAB OR ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY.

2. INFORMATION ON WHAT IS GOING ON IN OUTLYING AREAS IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO COME BY. NAWA-I-WAQT, A MAJOR SOURCE, TELLS US THAT THE MESSAGES SENT IN BY ITS CORRESPONDENTS IN DISTRICT TOWNS IS BEING CENSORED OR STOPPED ALTOGETHER. THE PRESS HAS UNDERPLAYED THE KARACHI DISTURBANCES AND HAS

FEATURED THE GOVERNMENT'S ACCOUNT OF THEM. (BUT NEWS OF WHAT HAPPENED QUICKLY REACHED THE PAK PUBLIC VIA BBC, WHOSE URDU SERVICE, AVAILABLE HERE ON MEDIUM WAVE, HAS APPARENTLY COME TO BE REGARDED AS THE BEST SOURCE OF AUTHENTIC INFORMATION AND IS WIDELY LISTENED TO.)

3. POLITICAL LEADERS CONTINUED TO EXCHANGE STATEMENTS AND CHARGES. NEITHER SIDE HAS CHANGED ITS POSITION. IN A TELECAST PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 19, EDUCATION MINISTER

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ABDUL HAFIZ PIRZADA TOOK A TOUGH LINE AGAINST THE OPPOSITION, AND DECLARED AGAIN THAT GENERAL ELECTIONS SUCH AS THOSE HELD ON MARCH 7 CANNOT BE DECLARED NULL AND VOID UNDER ANY CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION. CHIDING THE OPPOSITION FOR REFUSING TO ACCEPT THE POPULAR VERDICTS OF 1970 AND 1977 IN FAVOR OF THE PPP, PIRZADA SAID THAT THE PNA LEADERS WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED ON SUBSTANTIVE CHARGES WOULD BE TRIED. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION, HE SAID IT WAS HIGH TREASON TO ABROGATE, SUBVERT, OR ATTEMPT TO SUBVERT THE CONSTITUTION.

4. ON THE PNA SIDE, BOTH ALLIANCE VICE PRESIDENT NAWABZADA NASRULLAH KHAN AND ITS LEADER MUFTI MEHMUD WERE ALSO IN TOUCH WITH THE PRESS. (ANOTHER MAJOR PNA LEADER, ALLIANCE GENERAL SECRETARY GHAFOR AHMED, WAS ARRESTED IN KARACHI MARCH 19 IN A MOVE WHICH MIGHT HAVE HAD SOME INFLUENCE IN HELPING FOMENT THE DISTURBANCES THERE THAT DAY. AT THE SAME TIME, BEGUM WALI KHAN, ARRESTED IN KARACHI MAR 18, HAS BEEN FLOWN TO PESHAWAR AND RELEASED.) NEITHER NASRULLAH NOR MEHMUD SHOWED ANY GIVE IN A LAHORE PRESS

CONFERENCE. NASRULLAH CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO REVOKE ITS
DECISION TO CONVENE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION, SCHEDULED
FOR MAR 26,
AND CONDEMNED THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS BRUTALITY.
HE SAID NO NEGOTIATIONS WERE POSSIBLE UNTIL THE GOVERN-
MENT AGREED TO DECLARE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
ELECTIONS NULL AND VOID. MUFTI MEHMUD TOLD A NAWA-I-WAQT
CORRESPONDENT IN PESHAWAR THAT BY CONVENING A NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY SESSION, BHUTTO HAS IN EFFECT REJECTED THE PNA
DEMANDS. HE SAID THAT THE PM'S INVITATION TO THE PNA LEADERS
FOR A DIALOGUE WAS AN ATTEMPT TO HOODWINK THE PEOPLE.
HE ASKED RHETORICALLY HOW PNA COULD HAVE TALKS WITH THE
PM WHEN HE IS REFUSING TO CONSIDER ITS BASIC DEMANDS AND
WAS SUPPRESSING THE PEOPLE.

5. FURTHER PROCESSIONS AND DEMONSTRATIONS ARE EXPECTED
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TODAY. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO
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TELL, HOWEVER, WHAT EFFECT YESTERDAY'S BLOWUP IN KARACHI
WILL HAVE IN LAHORE AND OTHER POTENTIAL UPCOUNTRY TROUBLE
SPOTS.
BYROADE

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